**Increase in ceiling of Insured amount**

1302. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request has been received from the Andhra Pradesh Government to increase the ceiling amount per insured person per year to Rs. 1200/- and consequent E.S.I. sanctioned of Rs. 57.20 crores per year to the State; and

(b) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) The ESI Corporation is providing funds for medical care at the rate of Rs. 600/- per IP family per annum for running the medical scheme. The expenditure is shared between ESIC and State Government in the agreed ratio of 7:1. The proposal received from the State Government regarding enhancement of ceiling on medical care was considered by the ESIC and it has been decided to get a study done through a reputed professional institution so that a realistic ceiling for medical care could be fixed.

**Plight of Beedi workers in Orissa**

1303. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the plight of the Beedi workers in Orissa;

(b) whether a large number of workers are sitting idle without job as most of the Beedi working industries are on the verge of closure;

(c) if so, the steps taken to provide alternative employment to these workers; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The Government is implementing a number of welfare schemes in the fields of Health, Housing, Education and Recreation for the benefit of beedi workers and their dependants from the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund. Apart from this, the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 has been enacted to safeguard the interests of beedi workers. The State Government is advised from time to time to strictly enforce the provisions of various labour laws.

(b) to (d) As per information received from the State Government of Orissa, no specific instances have been brought to their notice.

**Smart Card for Employees in EPFO**

1304. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Employees Provident Fund Organisation is planning to introduce a smart card to enable the employees to get their dues within a few days of retirement;

(b) if so, whether this card would be valid in any Provident Fund office; and

(c) what are other essential details of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) The modernisation programme of Employees Provident Fund Organisation involves re-engineering of the existing work process, re-tooling of the accounting systems and setting up a of an information technology/computer enabled system through networking of all offices of EPFO. It envisages providing all services to every member from any EPF location on a real-time basis and to reduce the time between the receipt of a claim to the issue of the cheque to 2-3 days as against the present stipulated time of 30 days.

The programme involves development of appropriate application software of supporting the allotment of Nationally Unique Indentification Number to the members. The process of registration of members and generation of Nationally Unique Numbers will be done through in-house computer systems. The work of allotment of Smart Card will follow once the exercise of allotment of Nationally Unique Identification Number is complete. This system will enable the subscriber to access his account balance and file his claim from any of the EPF Offices as against the present system which limit him only to one office where he is registered.

**Creation of more jobs in Assam**

1305. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of candidates registered in Employment Exchanges in Assam as on 31st October, 2001;